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The capture of Ancona, 18 July 1944



Szlaki Nadziei
Opseja Wolności









Exactly two months after the victory at Monte Cassino, Polish soldiers once again proved their worth by conducting an independent operation which led to the capture of Ancona 82 years ago today.

The Polish II Corps began operations over the Adriatic Sea on 15 June 1944. German divisions resisted in successive positions, taking advantage of the flowing rivers. In early July 1944, the Poles captured Loreto, Recanati, Osimo, Castelfidardo and San Pietro Hill and approached Ancona.

During the battles for Ancona, the German air force carried out nightly bombardments mainly of the coastal area. On 6 July 1944, one of the bombs damaged the dome of the Basilica of Santa Casa di Loreto but did not penetrate the inside of the church. There was a fire. The basilica was extinguished by soldiers of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division. No Polish soldiers were killed or wounded during the action. At the foot of the basilica is a Polish cemetery where soldiers of the Polish II Corps were buried.

On 8 July 1944, Zbigniew Okulicki (born on 17 February 1924 in Kielce), son of General Leopold Okulicki a.k.a. Niedźwiadek, died in the fighting at Osimo near Ancona. He was buried in the cemetery of Loreto. "He was twenty years old. To this day I've been under the illusion that it's not true. I have never loved anyone in my life as much as I loved him." General Leopold Okulicki on the death of his only son Zbigniew, December 1944.

On 17 July 1944, at 6:00 a.m., the attack on Ancona began - it was

preceded by artillery attacks. On the outskirts of the town, Gen. Władysław Anders decided to launch the main attack with the forces of the 5th "Kresowa" Infantry Division, which was entrusted with the task of capturing the hills in the area of Paterniano - Monte della Crescia - Monte Tarto. In the coastal strip, enemy units were to be tied up in combat by the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division. From the Offagna area, the Germans led counterattacks. The enemy attacks were repelled, and the town was captured. The Polish infantry units managed to bypass the German positions and come out to the enemy's rear. On 18 July, the Poles entered the town. The Polish soldiers who fell and died of their wounds were buried in the Loreto

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